



SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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Senate clears the way for home brewers, winemakers to share and compete *SB 444 provides exemption to Attorney General's ruling from 2010*

SALEM – The Senate passed legislation this morning that will allow amateur beer and wine makers to share their products outside their homes and to enter amateur competitions. SB 444 was crafted in response to an Attorney General’s opinion that led to the cancellation of amateur homemade beer and wine competitions at the 2010 Oregon State Fair. That cancellation drew significant attention to how homemade beer and wine is treated in Oregon statute.

“I was shocked by last year’s ruling. My brew partner was extremely concerned because we brew at my house. Under current law, he would be subject to prosecution for transporting his portion home,” said Senator Floyd Prozanski (D-Eugene), a home brewer since 1987 who has won recognition for his beer. “This bill addresses the problems in this outdated statute and frees the home brew from unnecessary and prohibitive limitations.”

As it stands, statute put into law in the 1930s does not allow Oregonians who make homemade wine or beer to transport their beverages for consumption at another private residence. The statute also raises questions about whether receiving a prize at a homebrew competition or paying dues to a club counts as a financial payment for the beverage, which would require a license from the Oregon Liquor Control Commission (OLCC).

“Current law places an unreasonable limitation on a legitimate and popular hobby,” said Senate Majority Leader Diane Rosenbaum (D-Portland). “Many of Oregon’s famous craft breweries started with people making small batches in their homes. Home brewing and winemaking is part of Oregon’s unique character and this legislation will allow it to continue and grow.”

SB 444 expands the exemption for homemade beer, wine, and fermented fruit juice from the Liquor Control Act. The bill allows Oregonians to make, keep, store, transport, and consume homemade wine, beer, and fermented fruit juice. SB 444 also allows home brewers and winemakers to pay dues or event admission fees to participate in a club or an organization activity or event that includes tasting of homemade wine, beer, and fermented fruit juice.

Additionally, home brewers and winemakers can receive a tax deduction or credit for donating beer, wine, or fermented fruit juice to a nonprofit organization.

The bill now goes to the House for consideration.

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